

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was unable to return to Washington in time for votes on June 17, 2008 due to a personal matter in my hometown of Houston, TX. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

"Yea" on rollcall vote 414 on H.R. 2964, the Captive Primate Safety Act;

"Yea" on rollcall vote 415 on H.R. 3702, the Montana Cemetery Act;

"Yea" on rollcall vote 416 on H. Res. 1275, Honoring the life of Timothy John Russert, Jr., public servant, political analyst, and author.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Ms. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, I was absent during rollcall vote No. 416. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 1275—Honoring the life of Timothy John Russert, Jr., public servant, political analyst, and author.

RECOGNITION OF AMERICA'S  
FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
ELECTED OFFICIAL

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and pay special tribute to John Mercer Langston, America's first African-American Congressman from Virginia, a prominent abolitionist, and founder of Howard University's law school.

While the world is watching America's historic presidential election, with Barack Obama as the first African-American Democratic nominee, it is necessary to recognize the trailblazers that have come before him and the barriers that they have brought down.

John Mercer Langston was born in a small county, Louisa, Virginia, in 1829 to a wealthy white plantation owner and an emancipated slave of Indian and Black ancestry. During slavery Langston was able to overcome several racial obstacles. He moved to Ohio when he was young where he attended Oberlin College and obtained a bachelor's and master's degree. He tried to pursue a law degree but racism stopped him from taking the usual route of getting a law degree. He was admitted to Ohio's bar after studying law under attorney and Representative Philemon Bliss. Similar to Obama, Langston was a strong leader and organizer. Langston organize anti-slavery societies at a local and state level. He recruited African-American men to fight in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was a law scholar, a dean and founder of Howard

University's Law School. He was elected in 1888 and served as a shining example to those that came after him.

Barack Obama's historic achievement would not have been possible if it was not for people like John Mercer Langston who triumphed over racial hurdles. It is important to acknowledge that it has taken about 180 years to finally see an African-American so close to the Presidency. This is all possible because of the collective bravery and sacrifices of so many before him, and especially the catalyst of John Mercer Langston's, from Louisa County, great accomplishments.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, on June 17, 2008, I was unable to cast my votes on H.R. 2964, H.R. 3702, and H. Res. 1275, and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 414 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 2964, the Captive Primate Safety Act, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 415 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3702, the Montana Cemetery Act, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 416 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 1275, Honoring the life of Timothy John Russert, Jr., public servant, political analyst, and author, I would have voted "aye."

HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK  
OF SAMUEL L. EVANS OF PHILADELPHIA, PA

**HON. CHAKA FATTAH**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Mr. FATTAH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and work of an important Philadelphian who will long be remembered.

When one looks up the definition of a leader they will find these words, 'someone who guides or directs others.' Alongside that designation should be a photo of one of Philadelphia's most revered citizens, Samuel L. Evans.

Evans was an imposing figure standing tall among the politically powerful even as he reached out to those in need. He was both influential and inspirational, an activist and advocate. Evans was a warrior in the civil rights movement, and a mentor for countless aspiring politicians, educators and entrepreneurs.

Sam Evans was a complex man, one who never compromised when it came to his principles, a trait admired by some and criticized by others. Evans' unwavering dedication to the success of African American boys and girls in Philadelphia brought him legions of admirers among those he assisted. They are among the most prosperous and socially active citizens serving in leadership positions throughout the city and the nation.

A man of courage, strength and dignity, Sam Evans will be remembered for his tenacious spirit and admired for his unyielding loyalty.

A TRIBUTE RECOGNIZING THE  
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
FOUNDING OF ST. MARCELLINUS  
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CITY  
OF COMMERCE IN THE 34TH DISTRICT

**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2008*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the founding of the only Catholic church in the City of Commerce in the 34th Congressional District.

On August 10, 1958, the church's founding stone was placed on the spot that would become St. Marcellinus Church at 2349 Strong Avenue. Eight months later, the church's official open house took place on the feast of St. Marcellinus, the church's patron, on April 26, 1959.

Today, more than 600 people are registered parishioners of the church, and hundreds more attend mass on a regular basis. The church's services—held in both English and Spanish—continue to draw generations of Commerce families together in this industrial community of about 13,500 residents.

Parish Life Director Humberto Ramos was appointed to lead the congregation in August following the retirement of Father Jules Mayer after more than 21 years of service. Minister Ramos said the church serves many purposes in the community that extends well beyond religion. "Everybody knows each other in this community. This is their church. People need to have a sense of belonging."

To celebrate the church's important milestone, Cardinal Roger Mahoney will preside over its Golden Jubilee Mass on June 22 and recognize some of the church's founding members.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me along with Cardinal Mahoney and the parishioners of St. Marcellinus Church in celebrating the parish's 50 wonderful years of service to its members and the community.

I would also like to submit for the RECORD excerpts from a June 29, 2007 article that appeared in The Tidings, the weekly newspaper of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, that provides a detailed overview of the creation of St. Marcellinus Church. As the article points out, the church's founders are especially to be commended for their commitment and fortitude in creating this place of worship that today stands as the spiritual centerpiece of the Commerce community.

## ST. MARCELLINUS CHURCH: A HISTORY

(By Hermine Lees, The Tidings)

"... Before 1957, the idea of a local Catholic church serving this industry-heavy community southeast of downtown L.A. was only a dream for its residents, and fulfilled only after some 14 years of praying and planning. By then, residents of the communities of Bandini and Rosewood Park were hemmed in by the creation of the Santa Ana Freeway, rail yards and industry that separated them from St. Alphonsus Church.

Father Patrick O'Dowd, St. Alphonsus pastor, attempted to solve the problem by purchasing a parcel of land at the corner of Atlantic and Panocha, planning for a chapel in the area. But the Korean War and freeways intervened.

Only through the efforts of two local residents, Alex Perez and Ben Garcia, was a Catholic committee formed in 1954 to survey the area, raise funds and communicate their plan for a church to Cardinal James Francis McIntyre. By early 1957 their hard work was rewarded when Auxiliary Bishop Timothy Manning sent them this encouraging letter: "I join with you that this year will see the completion of our plans for Bandini. We have purchased the extra property we needed." On June 14, 1957, the parish of St. Marcellinus was established, with Father Thomas G. Hayes named the founding pastor.

The 42-year-old New Orleans native started his first pastorate by searching for a location to celebrate Mass. On Sunday, July 14, in the upstairs dining room of Kelly's Restaurant, he celebrated the first Mass for 120 faithful and claimed that Christ had come to Bandini and gathered his friends around him in another "upper room."

A crew of parishioners "rigged the upper room for church" for 10 weeks until a former Protestant church became "home." Eventually a plot at Strong Avenue and Harbor Street was available and by Holy Saturday, 1959, Father Hayes sang the first High Mass in the new church.

Although several historical sources differ on the name and rank of St. Marcellinus (some claim he was a pope, others a martyred priest), it is recorded that many miracles have occurred in his name. Kind of like the phenomenon of this parish surviving in the midst of freeways and commerce.

#### HONORING JOE RAY STEWART

#### HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to honor Joe Ray Stewart of Houka, Mississippi, for his fine service to our Nation during the Second World War.

Mr. Stewart served in the European Theatre under Generals Patton and Eisenhower, and built bridges wherever needed. In December 1944, the soldiers of the 249th Engineer Combat Battalion moved from building a bridge on the Saar River to the Ardennes, to block German advances in the Battle of the Bulge. The battalion was then assigned to the engineer task force charged to cross the Rhine River in Germany, and later tasked with securing and maintaining the bridges on the Rhine.

It has come to my attention that during his deployment, Mr. Stewart fought in three major battles, including the Battle of the Bulge, advanced to the rank of Corporal, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for bravery in action.

The family of Joe Ray Stewart, residing in Tennessee's Seventh District, joins me in recognizing a beloved and great American. As with all who serve in our Armed Forces, our veterans' dedication and selflessness has allowed our Nation the enduring blessing of freedom and democracy.

I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in honoring Joe Ray Stewart and remembering the service of all those veterans who risked their lives to defend our country and the entire free world.

#### DONNA SHALALA, PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM RECIPIENT

#### HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and happiness that our country is honoring one of South Florida's most outstanding citizens and a dear friend, Dr. Donna Shalala. This week Dr. Shalala will be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest civilian award in the United States. This is indeed a tremendous honor and her lifetime of service to our Nation is a testament to her humility of character and steadfastness of vision. She was born in Cleveland and graduated from the Western College for Women. Dr. Shalala's enthusiasm for education did not cease after she received her bachelor's degree but grew alongside her passion for government and civic service as witnessed by the time she spent as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Having received her masters and then doctorate at Syracuse University, Dr. Shalala started an illustrious teaching career that started at the City University of New York and continued at Columbia. With great teaching experience, she commenced her professional path in academic administration as the President of Hunter College, then as the Chancellor of Wisconsin-Madison and finally in the position she now holds as the President of the University of Miami, my alma mater.

Dr. Shalala's career has also expanded into the realm of government where she has held many positions in varying departments. She was the Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research in the Carter administration and the Chair of the Children's Defense Fund in 1992. Most significantly, she was the Secretary of Health and Human Service for the eight years of the Clinton administration.

In March of 2007, Dr. Shalala was named co-chair, along with former Senator Bob Dole, of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. Her knowledge and experience with the health care system proved invaluable as the Commission crafted its final report.

I am proud to represent Donna Shalala as a Congresswoman and delighted to share in this momentous occasion with her family and peers. More importantly I am honored to call her a friend.

#### GLADSTONE ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARD

#### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating the outstanding achieve-

ment of the city of Gladstone, Missouri, for being named one of the 10 winners of the National Civic League's 2008 All-America City Award. The award recognizes communities that identify community-wide challenges and successfully deal with those challenges head on. Gladstone was one of 17 finalists for the award, and the only city in the Kansas City area that was a finalist this year.

Gladstone on the Move, a citizen-based organization that identified long-range goals for the city, played a large role in making Gladstone stand out as an All-America City. Its recommendations included a property tax increase to pay for additional ambulance service, public improvements, an extension of a sales tax for the beautiful new community center, as well as a strong neighborhood revitalization program. The city of Gladstone should be proud of the way it effectively identified and met the needs of their residents.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in applauding Gladstone's city leaders and residents for their example of excellence as a winner of the National Civic League's 2008 All-America City. Their pride in their community and drive to keep improving their city should be commended and I am proud to represent them in Congress.

#### HONORING MR. AND MRS. MIGUEL NEGRON

#### HON. ALBIO SIRE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. and Mrs. Miguel Negron on being honored by the Puerto Rican Cultural Committee of Hoboken on Saturday, June 21, 2008. Miguel and Nelly Negron came to the United States in the 1950s from Utado, Puerto Rico, through Patchogue, Long Island, before establishing themselves in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1963. With their two children, Edith and Ivette, the Negrons began a new life and started their long commitment to their community. Miguel joined his cousin Israel Bula as a partner in the Bula Superette located in First and Garden Street in Hoboken. He later left the partnership and bought a bodega on his own where he and Nelly spent 6 days a week serving the neighborhood with native Hispanic food products for a total of 22 years.

In 1982 Nelly retired, and in 1985 Miguel joined her in retirement, although they hardly rested. Instead they cared for their three grandchildren. Miguel also continued to support his community by investing in real estate around the neighborhood and offering investment advice to his friends and neighbors.

Mr. and Mrs. Negron currently reside in the Caparra Home Townhouses in Hoboken, New Jersey, and are faithful parishioners of Saint Francis Church. The couple has been married